

Our Real Home

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato samma-sambuddhassa.

Homage to the Blessed One, the Worthy One, the Rightly Self-awakened One.

Silena sugatim yanti: Through virtue they go to a good destination.

Silena bhogasampada: Through virtue there's consummation of wealth.

Silena nibbutim yanti: Through virtue they go to nibbana.

Tasma silam visodhaye: So virtue should be purified.

Now, Grandma, set your heart on listening respectfully to the Dhamma, which is the teaching of the Buddha. While I'm teaching you the Dhamma, be as attentive as if the Buddha himself were sitting right in front of you. Close your eyes and set your heart on making your mind one. Bring the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha into your heart as a way of showing the Buddha respect.

Today I haven't brought you a gift of any substance, aside from the Dhamma of the Buddha. This is my last gift to you, so please accept it.

You should understand that even the Buddha — with all his virtues and perfections — couldn't avoid the weakening that comes with aging. When he reached the age you are, he let go. He let go of the fabrications of life.

Letting Go the Fabrications of Life

"Letting go" means that he put these things down. Don't carry them around. Don't weigh yourself down. Accept the truth about the fabrications of the body, whatever they may be: You've relied on them since you were born, but now it's enough. Now that they're old, they're like the utensils in your home — the cups, the saucers, and the plates — that you've held onto all these years. When you first got them they were bright and clean, but now they're wearing out. Some of them are broken, some of them are lost, while the ones remaining have all changed. They haven't stayed the same. That's just the way things are.

The same holds true with the parts of your body. From the time of birth and on through your childhood and youth, they kept changing. Now they're called "old." So accept the fact. The Buddha taught that fabrications aren't us, they aren't ours, whether they're inside the body or out. They keep changing in this way. Contemplate this until it's clear.

This body of yours, lying here and decaying, is the truth of the Dhamma. This truth is a teaching of the Buddha that's certain and sure.

He taught us to look at it, to contemplate it, to accept what's happening. And it's something you *should* accept, regardless of what's happening.

Training the Mind to Let Go and Leaving Things Be

The Buddha taught, when we're imprisoned, to make sure that it's only the body that's imprisoned. Don't let the mind be imprisoned. And the same thing applies here. When the body wears out with age, accept it. But make sure that it's only the body that's wearing out. Make sure that the affairs of the mind are something else entirely. This gives your mind energy and strength, because you see into the Dhamma that this is the way things are. This is the way they have to be.

As the Buddha taught, this is the way the body and mind are of their own accord. They can't be any other way. As soon as the body is born, it begins to age. As it ages, it gets sick. After it's sick, it dies. This truth is so true, this truth you're encountering today. It's the truth of the Dhamma. Look at it with your discernment so that you see.

Even if fire were to burn your house, or water were to flood it, or whatever the danger that would come to it, make sure that it's only the house that gets burned. Make sure your heart doesn't get burned along with it. If water floods your house, don't let it flood your heart. Make sure it floods only the house, which is something outside the body. As for the mind, get it to let go and leave things be — because now is the proper time, the proper time to let go.

Nothing in this World Is Lasting

You've been alive for a long time now, haven't you? Your eyes have had the chance to see all kinds of shapes, colors, and lights. The same with your other senses. Your ears have heard lots of sounds, all kinds of sounds — but they were no big deal. You've tasted really delicious foods — but they were no big deal. The beautiful things you've seen: They were no big deal. The ugly things you've seen: They were no big deal. The alluring things you've heard were no big deal. The ugly and offensive things you've heard were no big deal.

The Buddha thus taught that whether you're rich or poor, a child or an adult — even if you're an animal or anyone born in this world: There's nothing in this world that's lasting. Everything has to change in line with its condition. The truth of these conditions — if you try to fix them in a way that's not right — won't respond at all. But there *is* a way to fix things.

False Suppositions

The Buddha taught us to contemplate this body and mind to see that they aren't us, they aren't ours, they're just suppositions.

For example, this house of yours: It's only a supposition that it's yours. You can't take it with you. All the belongings that you suppose to be yours are just an affair of supposition. They stay right where they are. You can't take them with you. The children and grandchildren that you suppose to be yours are just an affair of supposition. They stay right where they are.

And this isn't just true for you. This is the way things are all over the world. Even the Buddha was this way. Even his enlightened disciples were this way. But they differed from us. In what way did they differ? They accepted this. They accepted the fact that the fabrications of the body are this way by their very nature. They can't be any other way.

This is why the Buddha taught us to contemplate this body from the soles of the feet on up to the top of the head, and from the top of the head on down to the soles of the feet. These are the parts of your body. So look to see what all is there. Is there anything clean? Anything of any substance? These things keep wearing down with time. The Buddha taught us to see that these fabrications aren't us. They're just the way they are. They aren't ours. They're just the way they are. What other way would you have them be? The way they are is already right. If you're suffering from this, then your thinking is wrong. When things are right but you see them wrong, it throws an obstacle across your heart.

Wrong View Creates Suffering

It's like the water in a river that flows downhill to the lowlands. It flows in line with its nature. The Ayutthaya River, the Muun River, whatever the river, they all flow downhill. They don't flow uphill. That's their nature.

Suppose a man were to stand on the bank of a river, watching the current flowing downhill, but his thinking is wrong. He wants the river to flow uphill. He's going to suffer. He won't have any peace of mind. Whether he's sitting, standing, walking, or lying down, he won't find any peace. Why? Because his thinking is wrong. His thinking goes against the flow. He wants the water to flow uphill, but the truth of the matter is that the water can't flow uphill. It's not appropriate. The nature of the water is that it has to flow along with the flow. That's its nature.

When this is the case, the man is upset. Why is he upset? Because his thinking is wrong, his ideas are wrong, all because of his wrong view. Right view sees that water has to flow downhill. This is a truth of the Dhamma that we can contemplate and see that it's true. When that man sees this truth, he can let go — he can let the water flow along with its flow. The problem that was eating away at his heart disappears. When the problem disappears, there's no more problem. When there's no problem, there's no suffering.

It's the same here. The water flowing downhill is like the life of your body. After it's young, it's old. When it's old, it flows along in its way. Don't think that you don't want it to be that way. Don't think like that. We don't have the power to fix it.

Awareness as One's Refuge

The Buddha looked at things in line with their conditions, that they simply have to be that way. So we let them go, we leave them be. Take your awareness as your refuge. Meditate on the word *buddho, buddho*. Even though you're really tired, put your mind with the breath. Take a good long out-breath. Take a good long in-breath. Take another good long out-breath. Focus your mind again if you wander off. Focus on the breath: *buddho, buddho*.

The more tired you feel, the more refined you have to keep focusing on in every time. Why? So that you can contend with pain. When you feel tired, stop all your thoughts. Don't think of anything at all. Focus the mind in at the mind, and then keep the mind with the breath: *buddho, buddho*. Let go of everything outside. Don't get fastened on your children. Don't get fastened on your grandchildren. Don't get fastened on anything at all. Let go. Let the mind be one. Gather the mind in to one. Watch the breath. Focus on the breath. Gather the mind at the breath. Just be aware at the breath. You don't have to be aware of anything else. Keep making your awareness more and more refined until it feels very small, but extremely awake.

The pains that have arisen will gradually grow calm. Ultimately, we watch the breath in the same way that, when relatives have come to visit us, we see them off to the boat dock or the bus station. Once the motor starts, the boat goes whizzing right off. We watch them until they're gone, and then we return to our home.

We watch the breath in the same way. We get acquainted with coarse breathing. We get acquainted with refined breathing.

As the breathing gets more and more refined, we watch it off. It gets smaller and smaller, but we make our mind more and more awake. We keep watching the breath get more and more refined until there's no more breath. There's just awareness, wide awake.

Aware, Awake, and Serene

This is called meeting with the Buddha. We stay aware, awake. This is what *buddho* means: what's aware, awake, serene. When that's the case, we're living with the Buddha. We've met with awareness. We've met with brightness. We don't send the mind anywhere else. It *gathers* in here. We've reached our Buddha. Even though he's already passed away, that was just the body. The real Buddha is awareness that's serene and bright. When you meet with this, that's all you have to know. Let everything gather right here.

Let go of everything, leaving just this singular awareness. But don't get deluded, okay? Don't lose track. If a vision or a voice arises in the mind, let it go. Leave it be. You don't need to take hold of anything at all. Just take hold of the awareness. Don't worry about the future; don't worry about the past. Stay right here. Ultimately you get so that you can't say that you're going forward, you can't say that you're going back, you can't say that you're staying in place. There's nothing to be attached to. Why? Because there's no self there, no you, no yours. It's all gone.

This is the Buddha's teaching: He tells us to be "all gone" in this way. He doesn't have us grab hold of anything. He has us be aware like this — aware and letting go.

Aware and Letting Go

This is your duty right now, yours alone. Try to enter into the Dhamma in this way. This is the path for gaining release from the round of wandering-on. Try to let go, to understand, to set your heart on investigating this.

Don't be worried about this person or that. Your children, your grandchildren, your relatives, everybody: Don't be worried about them. Right now they're fine. In the future they'll be just like this: like you are right now. Nobody stays on in this world. That's the way it has to be. This is a condition, a truth, that the Buddha taught. All the things that don't have any truth to them, he has us leave them be. When you leave them be, you can see the truth.

If you don't leave them be, you won't see the truth. That's the way things are. Everybody in the world has to be this way. So don't be worried. Don't fasten onto things.

Thinking with Discernment; Being Aware with Discernment

If the mind is going to think, let it think, but think using discernment. Think with discernment. Don't think with foolishness. If you think about your grandchildren, think about them with discernment, not with foolishness. Whatever there is, you can think about it, you can be aware of it, but think with discernment, be aware with discernment. If you're really aware with discernment, you have to let go. You have to leave things be. If you think with discernment and are aware with discernment, there's no suffering, no stress. There's just happiness, peace, and respite, all in one. The mind gathers like this. All you need to hold onto in the present is the breath.

This is your duty now. It's not the duty of anyone else. Leave their duties to them. Your duty is your duty. And your duty right now is to keep your awareness at your mind, making sure it doesn't get stirred up. Your duty is to know how your mind is doing. Is it worried about anything? Is it concerned about anything? Examine the mind while you're lying here sick. Don't take on the duties of your children. Don't take on the duties of your grandchildren. Don't take on the duties of anyone else. Don't take on any outside duties at all. They're none of your business. Now's the time for you to let go, to leave things be. When you let go in this way, the mind will be at peace. This is your duty now, right here in the present.

Letting Preoccupations Go

When you're sick like this, gather the mind into oneness. This is your duty. Let everything else go its own way. Sights, sounds, smells, tastes, whatever: Let them go their own way. Just stay focused on your duty.

If any preoccupation comes in to bother the mind, just say in your heart: "Leave me alone. Don't bother me. You're no affair of mine." If any critical thoughts come up — fear for your life, fear that you'll die, thinking of this person, thinking of that person — just say in your heart, "Don't bother me. You're no affair of mine."

This is because you see all the Dhammas that arise. What are Dhammas? Everything is a Dhamma. There's nothing now that isn't a Dhamma.

What's the world? The world is any preoccupation that gets you stirred up, that disturbs you right now. "How is that person going to be? How is this person going to be? When I die will anyone look after them?" All of this is the world. Whatever we think up — fear of death, fear of aging, fear of illness, whatever the fear — it's all world. Drop the world — it's just world. That's the way the world is. If it arises in the mind, make yourself understand: The world is nothing but a preoccupation. Preoccupations obscure the mind so that it can't see itself.

Not Clinging to Fabrications

Whatever arises in the mind, tell yourself: "This isn't any affair of mine. It's an affair of inconstancy, an affair of stress, an affair of not-self."

If you think that you'd like to keep on living a long time, it makes you suffer. If you think that you'd like to die right now and get it all over with, that's not the right way either, you know. It makes you suffer, too, because fabrications aren't yours. You can't fix them up. They're just the way they are. You can fix them up a little bit, as when you fix up the body to make it look pretty or clean. Or like children: They paint their lips and let their nails grow long to make them look pretty. But that's all there is to it. When they get old, they all end up in the same bucket. They fix up the outside, but can't really fix things. That's the way it is with fabrications. The only thing you can fix is your heart and mind.

Our Real Home: The Presence of Peace

This house you're living in: You and your husband built it. Other people can build houses, too, making them large and lovely. Those are outer homes, which anyone can build. The Buddha called them outer homes, not your real home. They're homes only in name.

Homes in the world have to fall in line with the way of the world. Some of us forget. We get a big home and enjoy living in it, but we forget our real home. Where is our real home? It's in the sense of peace. Our real home is peace.

This home you live in here — and this applies to every home — is lovely, but it's not very peaceful. First this, then that; you're worried about this, you're worried about that: This isn't your real home. It's not your inner home. It's an outer home. Someday soon you'll have to leave it. You won't be able to live here anymore. It's a worldly home, not yours.

This body of yours, that you still see as you and yours, is a home that stays with you a while. You think that it's you and yours, but it's not. It, too, is a worldly home. It's not your real home. People prefer to build outer homes; they don't like to build inner homes. You rarely see any homes where people can really stay and be at peace. People don't build them. They build only outer homes.

Arising and Passing Away of Fabrications

Think about it for a minute. How is your body right now? Think about it from the day you were born all the way up to the present moment. We keep running away from progress. We keep running until we're old, running until we're sick. We don't want things to be that way, but we can't prevent it. That's just the way things are. They can't be any other way. It's like wanting a duck to be like a chicken, but it can't because it's a duck. If you want a chicken to be like a duck, it can't, because it's a chicken. If you want ducks to be like chickens, and chickens to be like ducks, you simply suffer — because these things are impossible. If you think, "Ducks have to be the way they are, and chickens the way *they* are; they can't be any other way," then that kind of thinking gives you energy and strength.

No matter how much you want this body to stay stable and permanent, it can't be that way. It's just the way it is. The Buddha called it a fabrication.

Anicca vata sankhara: How inconstant are fabrications!

Uppada-vaya-dhammino: Their nature is to arise and pass away.

Uppajjhivva nirujjhanti: Arising, they disband.

Tesam vupasamo sukho: Their stilling is bliss.

This fabrication — this body-and-mind — is inconstant. It's not dependable. It's here and then it's not. It's born and then it passes away. But we human beings want it to be constant. That's the thinking of a fool.

Accepting Change

Just look at your breath. It goes out and then it comes in. It comes in and then it goes out. That's the nature of breath. It has to be that way. It has to change, to go back and forth. The affairs of fabrication *depend* on change. You can't have them *not* change. Just look at your breath. Can you keep it from coming in? Does it feel comfortable?

If you draw in a breath and then don't let it go out, is that any good? Even if you want it to be constant, it can't be constant. It's impossible. It goes out and then it comes in. It comes in and then it goes out. It's such a normal thing.

We're born and then we age; we age and then we get sick and die. It's so normal. But we don't like it. It's as if we wanted the breath to come in and not go out; or to go out and not come in. When it comes in and out, out and in, we can live. Human beings and animals have been living right up to the present because fabrications follow their duty in line with their conditions. That's their truth.

Birth, Aging, Illness, and Death

So we have to see their truth in line with their truth. As with the affair of birth, aging, illness, and death: Once we're born, we're already dead. Birth and death are all the same thing. One part is the beginning, and one part the end. Just like a tree: When it has a base, it has an upper tip. When it has an upper tip, it has a base. When there's no base, there's no upper tip. There's no upper tip without a base. That's the way things are.

It's kind of funny, you know. We human beings, when somebody dies, get all sad and upset. We cry and grieve — all kinds of things. It's delusion. It's delusion, you know, to cry and lament when somebody dies. That's the way we've been since who knows when. We hardly ever reflect to see things clearly. In my opinion, and you'll have to forgive me for saying this, but if you're going to cry when somebody dies, it'd be better to cry when somebody's born. But we have things all backwards. If somebody's born we laugh; we're happy and glad. But really, birth is death, and death is birth. The beginning is the end, and the end is the beginning. When someone dies or is about to die, we cry. That's foolishness. If you're going to cry, it'd be better to cry from the very beginning. For birth is death. Without birth, there's no death. Do you understand? Death is birth, and birth is death.

Letting Things Be the Way They Are . . . Letting Go

Don't think in a way that puts you in a turmoil. Just let things be the way they are. This is your duty now. No one else can help you. Your children can't help you; your grandchildren can't help you; your wealth can't help you. The only thing that can help you is if you correct your sense of things right now. Don't let it waver back and forth. Let go. Let go.

Even if we don't let things go, they're already ready to go. The parts of your body are trying to run away. Do you see this? When you were young, your hair was black. Now it's gray. This is how it's already running away. When you were young, your eyes were bright and clear, but now they're blurry. Do you see this? They're already running away. They can't hold out any longer, so they have to run away. This is no longer their place to stay. Every part of your body has started running away. When you were young, were your teeth solid and sturdy? Now they're loose. You may have put in false teeth, but they're something new, not the original ones. The original ones have run away. Every part of your body — of everybody's body — is trying to run away.

Your eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body: All of these things are trying to run away. Why? Because this isn't their place to stay. They're fabrications, so they *can't* stay. They can stay for only a while and then they have to go. And it's not just you. Every part of the body — hair of the head, hair of the body, nails, teeth, skin, everything — is getting ready to run away. Some parts have already gone, but not yet everything. All that's left are a few house sitters. They're looking after the house, but they're no good. The eyes are no good; the teeth are no good; the ears are no good. This body's no good because the good things have already run away. They keep running away, one after another.

You have to understand that this is no place for human beings to stay. It's just a shelter where you can rest a bit, and then you have to move on.

Everything Getting Ready to Leave

So don't let yourself be worried about so many things. You've come to live in the world, so you should contemplate the world to see that that's the way it is: Everything's getting ready to run away. Look at your body. Is there anything there that's like what it used to be? Is the skin like it used to be? Is your hair like it used to be? Are your eyes like they used to be? Are your ears like they used to be? Are your teeth like they used to be? No, they're not. They've run off to who knows where.

This is what their nature is like. Once they've served their time, they have to go. Why do they have to go? Because that's their duty. That's their truth. This isn't a place where anything can stay permanently. And while they're staying here, they're a turmoil: sometimes pleasant, sometimes painful, with no respite or peace.

It's like a person who's traveling back home but hasn't yet arrived. He's still on the way, sometimes going forward, sometimes going back:

a person with no place to stay. As long as he hasn't reached home, he's not at his ease: no ease while he's sitting, no ease while he's lying down, no ease while he's walking, no ease while he's riding in a car. Why? Because he hasn't yet reached home. When we reach our home, we're at our ease because we understand that this is our home.

It's the same here. The affairs of the world are never peaceful. Even if we're rich, they're not peaceful. If we're poor, they're not peaceful. If we're adults they're not peaceful. If we're children they're not peaceful. If we lack education, they're not peaceful. If we're educated, they're not peaceful. All these affairs are not peaceful: That's just the way they are. That's why poor people suffer, rich people suffer, children suffer, adults suffer. Old people suffer the sufferings of old people. The sufferings of children, the sufferings of rich people, the suffering of poor people: They're all suffering.

Inconstancy, Stress, and Not-Self

Every part in your body is running away, one thing after another. When you contemplate this, you'll see *aniccam*: They're inconstant. *Dukkham*: They're stressful. Why is that? *Anatta*: They're not-self.

This body you're living in, this body sitting and lying here sick, along with the mind that knows pleasure and pain, that knows that the body is sick: Both of these things are called Dhamma.

The mental things with no shape, that can think and feel, are called *nama*. They're *nama-dhamma*. The things that have physical shape, that can hurt, that can grow and shrink, back and forth: That's called *rupa-dhamma*. Mental things are dhamma. Physical things are dhamma. That's why we say we live with the Dhamma. There's nothing there that's really us. It's just Dhamma. Dhamma conditions arise and then pass away. They arise and then pass away. That's how conditions are. They arise and then pass away. We arise and pass away with every moment. This is how conditions are.

Seeing the Dhamma

This is why, when we think of the Buddha, we can see that he's really worth respecting, really worth bowing down to, for he spoke the truth. He spoke in line with the truth. Once we see that that's the way it is, we see the Dhamma. Some people practice the Dhamma but don't see the Dhamma. Some people study the Dhamma, practice the Dhamma, but don't see the Dhamma. They still don't have any place to stay.

So you have to understand that everybody, all the way down to ants and termites and all the other little animals, is trying to run away. There's no one who can stay here. Living things stay for a while and then they all go: rich people, poor people, children, old people, even animals. They all keep changing.

Disenchantment – the Heart Sobering Up

So when you sense that the world is like this, you see that it's disenchanting. There's nothing that's really you or yours. You're disenchanted — *nibbida*. Disenchantment isn't disgust, you know. It's just the heart sobering up. The heart has seen the truth of the way things are: There's no way you can fix them. They're just the way they are. You let them go. You let go without gladness. You let go without sadness. You just let things go as fabrications, seeing with your own discernment that that's the way fabrications are. This is called, *anicca vata sankhara*: Fabrications are inconstant. They change back and forth. That's inconstancy.

Seeing the Constant

To put it in simple terms: Inconstancy is the Buddha. When we really see that these things are inconstant, that's the Buddha. When we look clearly into inconstancy, we'll see that it's constant. How is it constant? It's constant in being that way. It doesn't change into any other way. Human beings and animals, once they're born, are all that way. They're constant in that way — in that they're inconstant. They keep changing, changing from children to young people to old people: That's how they're inconstant. But the fact that everyone is that way: That's constant. That doesn't change. Things keep changing in that way. When you see this, your heart can be at peace, for it's not just you. It's everyone.

Letting the Mind Be at Peace

When you think in this way, it's disenchanting. *Nibbida* arises. It cures you of your lust and desire for sensuality, for the world, for the baits of the world. If you have a lot of them, you abandon a lot. If you have a little, you abandon a little. Look at everyone. Have you seen any of these things since you were born? Have you seen poor people? Have you seen rich people? Have you seen people who die young? Have you seen people who die old? We've *all* seen these things. They're no big deal.

The important point is that the Buddha has us build a home for ourselves, to build a home in the way I've described to you.

Build a home so you can let go, so that you can leave things be. Let them go and then leave them be. Let the mind reach peace. Peace is something that doesn't move forward, doesn't move back, doesn't stay in place. That's why its peace. It's peace in that it's free from going forward, free from moving back, free from staying in place.

Pleasure isn't a place for you to stay. Pain isn't a place for you to stay. Pain wears away. Pleasure wears away. Our foremost Teacher said that all fabrications are inconstant. So when we reach this last stage in life, he tells us to let go and leave things be. We can't take them with us. We'll have to let them go anyhow, so wouldn't it be better to let them go beforehand? If we carry them around, they weigh us down. When we sense that they weigh us down, we won't carry them around. Wouldn't it be better to let them go beforehand? So why carry them around? Why be attached to them? Let your children and grandchildren look after you, while you can rest at your ease.

When Parents Become Children

Those who look after the sick should be virtuous. Those who are sick should give others the opportunity to look after them. Don't give them difficulties. Wherever there's pain, learn how to keep your mind in good shape. Those who look after their parents should have their virtues, too. You have to be patient and tolerant. Don't feel disgust. This is the only time you can really repay your parents. In the beginning you were children, and your parents were adults. It was in dependence on them that you've been able to grow up. The fact that you're all sitting here is because your parents looked after you in every way. You owe them a huge debt of gratitude.

So now you should understand that your mother is a child. Before, you were her children, but now she's your child. Why is that? As people get older, they turn into children. They can't remember things; their eyes can't see things; their ears can't hear things; they make mistakes when they speak, just like children. So you should understand and let go. Don't take offense at what the sick person says and does. Let her have her way, in the same way you'd let a child have its way when it won't listen to its parents. Don't make it cry. Don't make it frustrated.

It's the same with your mother. When people are old, their perceptions get all skewed. They want to call one child, but they say another one's name. They ask for a bowl when they want a plate.

They ask for a glass when they want something else. This is the normal way things are, so I ask you to contemplate it for yourself.

At the same time, the sick person should think of those looking after her. Have the virtue of patience and endurance in the face of pain. Make an effort in your heart so that it isn't a turmoil. Don't place too many difficulties on the people looking after you. As for those looking after the sick person, have the virtue of not feeling disgust over mucus and saliva, urine and excrement. Try to do the best you can. All of the children should help in looking after her.

Heartfelt Benefaction and Gratitude

She's now the only mother you have. You've depended on her ever since you were born: to be your teacher, your nurse, your doctor — she was everything for you. This is the benefaction she gave in raising you. She gave you knowledge; she provided for your needs and gave you wealth. Everything you have — the fact that you have children and grandchildren, nice homes, nice occupations, the fact that you can send your children to get an education — the fact that you even have yourself: What does that come from? It comes from the benefaction of your parents who gave you an inheritance so that your family line is the way it is.

The Buddha thus taught benefaction and gratitude. These two qualities complement each other. Benefaction is doing good for others. When we've received that goodness, received that help: Whoever has raised us, whoever has made it possible for us to live, whether it's a man or a woman, a relative or not, that person is our benefactor.

Gratitude is our response. When we've received help and support from benefactors, we appreciate that benefaction. That's gratitude. Whatever they need, whatever difficulty they're in, we should be willing to make sacrifices for them, to take on the duty of helping them. This is because benefaction and gratitude are two qualities that undergird the world so that your family doesn't scatter, so that it's at peace, so that it's as solid and stable as it is.

Today I've brought you some Dhamma as a gift in your time of illness. I don't have any other gift to give. There's no need to bring you any material gift, for you have plenty of material things in your house, and over time they just cause you difficulties. So I've brought you some Dhamma, something of substance that will never run out.

"Our Real Home" by Ajaan Chah

Now that you've heard this Dhamma, you can pass it on to any number of other people, and it'll never run out. It'll never stop. It's the truth of the Dhamma, a truth that always stays as it is.

I'm happy that I've been able to give you this gift of Dhamma so that you'll have the strength of heart to contend with all the things you face.

Source: "Our Real Home", by Ajaan Chah, translated from the Thai by Thanissaro Bhikkhu. *Access to Insight (Legacy Edition)*, 2 November 2013, http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/thai/chah/our_real_home.html .

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